of Chinese culture were divided had become enfeebled, Ch'u. reached out from the South and menaced them with possible absorption. At this juncture the threatened states, in self-defence, for the moment ignoring their enmities, by treaty formed a league against the invader (B.C. 681) and placed themselves under the protection of the prince of Ch'i.

The league thus formed endured for more than two centuries. The authority of its head was confirmed by investiture from the Chou *Wang.* Assemblies of the league were not held at stated intervals, but whenever need arose the heads of the allies were convoked by the president. Some convened for the purpose of undertaking a joint war and were attended by the feudal chiefs with all their armed contingents. Others, with peaceful purposes, did not bring together so large a body of men.

Late in the reign of Huan, after Kuan Chung had died (B.C. 643), Ch'i fell into internal confusion and the presidency passed out of its hands. For some years thereafter the very existence of the league was threatened. The head of Sung, one of the other member states, attempted as its president, but in vain, to give it adequate leadership, and at least one of the members sought safety in an alliance with that very Ch'u whose aggressions had brought the organization into existence.

The league, thus jeopardized, was salvaged and given renewed strength by the presidency of Wen, prince of Chin. Chin, located in the mountains and plateaus of the present Shansi, was not so easily unified as Ch'i, on the adjoining plain, for internal barriers favored the independence of the local clans. Wen, whose persona? name was Ch'ung Erh, was the son of a barbarian mother. Before his accession he had learned hardihood and resourcefulness

by years of wandering and adventurous exile. In B.C. 636 he succeeded in establishing himself in Chin, and during a brief reign of eight years (he died B.C. 628) he exercised the rule so ably that for a century and a half thereafter his descendants were usually the acknowledged heads of the league. By skillful administrative reorganization he welded his principality into an effective fighting unit. Then, allying himself with other states, he attacked and overwhelmingly defeated Ch'u, and was appointed by the Chou ruler as the head of the feudal chiefs. . ,

Chin, placed at the forefront of the Chinese states by the prow-